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Before “In the Beginning,”  
Or “In the Beginning God”:  
The God Who is Poet and Theo-Poet

If, as I have stated in the introduction, deification is the intended end for which humanity, and by extension, all of creation (more on that below) and if human creativity is an essential aspect of deification, then it is necessary to begin this book in earnest with the doctrine of God. This chapter will argue that just as we call God Creator, we ought to call God Deifier. Also, this chapter seeks to lay the foundation for the importance human creativity has in deification by arguing that if God is Creator, and if we can also call him Poet, then human beings, made in his image, are also called to be creators and poets. I will show this first by examining Gregory of Nazianzus’s *Theological Orations* and Augustine of Hippo’s *De Trinitate*. Both authors in their respective texts set out to defend the doctrine of the Trinity. They do so, particularly in the portions I have selected, by way of defending the divinity of the Son and the Spirit. What is most important, however, is that the means by which they defend the Trinity is through deification. Particularly

in Augustine's work, is this first through salvation. For my purposes, salvation and deification are almost synonymous. Deification, while intended for humanity before salvation was necessary, is now the end goal and process by which humans are saved. Salvation, from sin and death, is part of what makes possible deification. What else makes deification possible will be explored throughout the rest of this book. From these sources, I will argue for the inseparability of deification from the doctrine of the Trinity, that one inherently leads to the other.

After examining these patristic accounts of deification and the doctrine of the Trinity, I will turn my attention to Thomas Aquinas. First in Aquinas' Five Ways, I will show that his new usage of Aristotelean Metaphysics makes space for defining God as deifier. I will utilize the work of A. N. Williams<sup>1</sup> and Rudi Te Velde<sup>2</sup> in order to make this point. Aquinas' Five Ways, I will argue, give evidence that God is qualitatively different from anything created, which is anything that is not God. The Five Ways also argue for a God who is the final cause and who shares his perfections with created being. All of these points will lead to the conclusion that God is inherently Deifier and that his creatures participate in him as Creator. I will also discuss the role the *analogia entis* plays in deification, as well as human creativity. The chapter will end with a brief discussion of divine simplicity and a final section on God as Creator and Poet.

### Defending Divinity and Deification

Debates surrounding the nature of God and the persons of the Trinity served as the soil into which orthodoxy was sown and raised. John Behr has argued that in these debates, those groups labeled as heretics were the first to sever themselves from the orthodox mainline and that the councils and creeds that followed served to firm up the language and theology behind what was already taught and believed. These debates primarily surrounded the nature and place of the Son and the Spirit.

1. A. N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1999).

2. Rudi A. Te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The "Divine Science" of the Summa Theologiae* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

Are they divine? If so, are they divine in the same way the Father is? If not, are they creatures? The divinity of the Father was not in question during these debates; rather, they centered on the divinity of the Son and the Spirit. Therefore, in this opening section, I will examine two works by Gregory of Nazianzus and Augustine of Hippo. While dealing with early debates in the church—debates that happened well after the creation of the cosmos, as well as after the incarnation—this discussion is necessary to begin with in order to come to a foundational understanding of God. In this way, God as Trinity is placed at the beginning, as a kind of retcon,<sup>3</sup> for understanding God as he is (insofar as this is humanly possible) and what relationship God's being has to deification and human creativity. This is necessary because these theologians, in defending the divinity of the Son and Spirit, made use of deification. Specifically, they argued that deification, the end for humanity seemingly assumed by all contenders, is impossible if the Son and Spirit are not divine as the Father is divine. While many of the Fathers could be used to make this argument, I will focus on the works of Gregory of Nazianzus and Augustine of Hippo. Gregory, as heir to Athanasius in the Arian debates, is suitable as a culmination of the Athanasian line of reasoning. Augustine provides a Latin voice, making very similar arguments to those made by Gregory. Augustine is also typically seen as a foundational voice in Western Trinitarian theology.

One commonality among patristic writers during times of theological turmoil, is that when defending the doctrine of the Trinity, whether as such or by defending the divinity of either the Son or the Spirit, salvation and deification are frequently employed against heretics. The purpose for doing this is twofold. The first reason is to

3. Short for retroactive continuity, a term used in works of fiction, particularly comic books, that takes a present situation or present information and goes back placing that information or situation at the beginning of the story. An example of this would be the nature of the ring between *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. In the former, the ring is simply a magic ring that conveys invisibility. In the latter, it takes on new meaning when it becomes the Ring of Power, made by the dark Lord Sauron. This caused Tolkien to go back and change a few things in *The Hobbit*, but even without these, the reader's understanding of the ring changes once they know what the ring really is. Similarly, the Old Testament and even parts of the New, do not at first recognize God as Trinity, yet when one goes back and reads, Genesis for instance, one sees that being made in the image and likeness of God means being made in the image and likeness of the Trinity.

recognize points of connection (when the interlocutor is heterodox, but still considers himself as Christian). By showing how the heterodox understandings of God cannot lead to the generally understood notion of deification/salvation, the orthodox writers show the weaknesses in their opponents' arguments. This is the approach of Athanasius in his *De Incarnatione* and Gregory Nazianzen's *Theological Orations*. Even John Cassian's *De Incarnatione* uses Nestorius' language against him to show that his views, as Cassian understands them, cannot lead to the orthodox understanding of salvation and deification.<sup>4</sup> The other reason is that for these early theologians, such as Augustine, questions of who God is (or who is God) and how he saves/deifies are inherently inseparable. For the Church Fathers, to write of one is, in the end, to write of the other.

Deification is seen to be at the heart of Gregory's work. Christopher A. Beeley writes similarly, that, for Gregory:

Spiritual progress and right belief unavoidably go together. In other words, Gregory's doctrines of God and of the human person intrinsically involve each other. . . . Gregory's doctrine of the Trinity thus includes the theologian's own situation with respect to God, and theology is a real illumination by which the theologian is initiated into the divine mystery in concrete and far-reaching ways.<sup>5</sup>

This is evident when one sees that Gregory believed that inquiring into theological questions, especially the nature of the Trinity, was a potentially dangerous pursuit.<sup>6</sup> However, he makes it clear that the faithful ought always to be mindful of God, "It is more important that we should remember God than that we should breathe; indeed, if one may say so, we should do nothing else besides."<sup>7</sup> Gregory indicates

4. I will return to this in the third chapter.

5. C.A. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 64.

6. Or. 27.3 "Discussion of theology is not for everyone, I tell you, not for everyone—it is no such inexpensive or effortless pursuit. Nor, I would add, is it for every occasion, or every audience; neither are all its aspects open to inquiry. It must be reserved for certain occasions, and certain audiences, and certain limits must be observed. It is not for all people, but only for those who have been tested and have found a sound footing in study, and more importantly, have undergone, or at the very least are undergoing, purification of body and soul." All quotations from Gregory's *Theological Orations* are from Gregory Nazianzen, *On God and Christ*, trans. Frederick Williams and Lionel Wickham (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002).

that, “The discovery [of God in his nature and essence] will take place, so my reason tells me, when this God-like, divine thing, I mean our mind and reason, mingles with its kin, when the copy returns to the pattern it now longs after. This seems to me to be the dictum that we shall, in time to come ‘know even as we are known [1 Cor 13.12].’”<sup>8</sup> Gregory, in this passage, fits well into Ivan Popov’s idealist category.<sup>9</sup> Deification begins in the immaterial part of the human being, which is most like God, and works its way out into the rest of the human being—namely, the material. When this happens, human knowledge of the Trinity shall be deeper and fuller than it can be before this event. Gregory does not make it explicit in this passage whether the coming together of the human mind/soul—and then the body—will happen before or after the resurrection. However, given the progressive nature of it “that we shall, in time to come, ‘know . . . ,’”<sup>10</sup> it is reasonable that this is an event which begins even now and continues on, in need of resurrection to continue. Therefore, for Gregory, knowledge of the Triune God is deifying. Gregory also emphasizes here something we shall see below—humanity, being made in the image and likeness, is naturally related to God. We participate in God, naturally, in a way the rest of the creation does not. Creation contains only a vestige of God, it is not created in his image and likeness. Only humanity has that honor. However, as I will show below, this is not enough, it is not until we “mingle with our kin,” something that can only happen by grace and adoption, that we will be able to come to know God.

In Gregory’s defense of the Incarnation, which is, at heart, a defense of the Trinity, Gregory says of Christ, “He bears the title, ‘Man’ . . . with the aim of hallowing Man through himself, by becoming a sort of yeast for the whole lump. He has united with himself all that lay under condemnation in order to release it from condemnation.”<sup>11</sup> By the Son’s coming forth from the Father and incarnating himself as a

7. *Or. 27.4.*

8. *Or. 28.17.*

9. See introduction.

10. *Or. 28.18*

11. *Or. 30.21.*

man, he hallows the lump, he makes all humanity holy, makes it like himself by uniting it to himself.

Speaking of the Spirit, Gregory notes the inconsistencies in Christian liturgical practice: if the Spirit is not also a person of the Godhead: “Were the Spirit not to be worshipped, how could he deify me through baptism? If he is to be worshipped, why not adored? And if to be adored, how can he fail to be God? One links with the other, a truly golden chain of salvation. From the Spirit comes our rebirth, from rebirth comes a new creating, from new creating a recognition of the worth of him who effected it.”<sup>12</sup> This “chain of salvation,” as Gregory calls it, leads to the conclusion that Spirit must also be God since he works to deify us. As I noted above, what one does not have by nature, one cannot give to another. Thus, if the Spirit is not God by nature, then he cannot deify us. Since, however, it is accepted that one is to be baptized in the name of the Spirit (as well as in the Father and the Son) and that baptism is a link in the “golden chain of salvation” that imparts deification, then the Spirit must also be God and Deifier.

Augustine writing nearly a century later comes to many of the same conclusions as Gregory. In defending the Trinity, Augustine makes use of his understanding of salvation and deification.<sup>13</sup> He writes, “This is the trinity we are to enjoy in order to live in bliss; but if we have false beliefs about it our hope is vain and our chastity is not chaste.”<sup>14</sup> For Augustine, a proper understanding of the Trinity leads to right faith and right living. In other words, orthodoxy leads to orthopraxy, and by extension, heterodoxy leads to heteropraxy. One of the key ways Augustine focuses our understanding of the Trinity is through salvation, or, to put it another way, God’s actions toward and relationship with his creation. Augustine argues that even:

[T]o contemplate God, which by nature we are not, we would have to be

12. *Or. 31.28.*

13. Often, the terms “salvation” and “deification” can be used almost interchangeably. Both are concerned with the transformation of human persons, both individually and corporately, into Sons of God by adoption. However, there is an important distinction: salvation is explicitly related to humanity’s sinfulness. Humanity is saved from sin and death and to eternal life. Deification, however, has to do with humanity’s end, the purpose for which humanity is created.

14. *De Trin. 8.3.8.*

cleansed by him who became what by nature we are and what by sin we are not. By nature we are not God; by nature we are men; by sin we are not just. So God became a just man to intercede with God for sinful man. The sinner did not match the just, but man did match man. So he applied to us the similarity of his humanity to take away the dissimilarity of our iniquity and becoming a partaker of our mortality he made us partakers of his divinity.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, for Augustine, as we presently are, we are incapable of contemplating God. Yet, God has chosen to cleanse us through the life of Christ, and this leads not only to contemplation of the Trinity, but actually leads to our becoming partakers of God's divinity. Lewis Ayres writes concerning this need for purification in Augustine, "... what it means to be taken up into the divine life revolves around his account of the purified soul, which must both reflect the one in whose image it is made and exhibit its own mysterious 'union' with the divine life present in it."<sup>16</sup>

Even at the beginning of the *De Trinitate*, Augustine writes, "Now divinity cannot be seen by human sight in any way whatever; it is seen by a power of sight which makes those who already see with it not human, but super human."<sup>17</sup> Humanity's goal, according to Augustine, the thing for which it strives, is the beatific vision, the vision of the Triune God. However, humans cannot see God as they are; the sight, as Augustine says, is "super human." The ability to see God as we are intended to do so, is one beyond our natural ability, and yet, we naturally desire to see—and thus be in union with—God. It is both de Lubac's natural desire for the supernatural<sup>18</sup> and it is deification, for to receive the sight is a gift and one that lifts us beyond what we are to what we are intended to be, gods.<sup>19</sup>

15. *De Trin.* 4.2.4.

16. Lewis Ayres, *Nicæa and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 311.

17. *De Trin.* 1.2.11.

18. Cf. Henri de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Herder & Herder, 2013).

19. Throughout, I will use God and gods interchangeably for the end result of our deification. Neither are to be taken in their literal sense, as I argued in the Introduction. Rather, they signify two different aspects of our deification as well as the ways scripture and the Fathers use the terms. To be called God is to evoke that participatory and analogical relationship to the Godhead that the deified enjoy (or will enjoy). It makes clear the one to whom we are being conformed. It

## BEING DEIFIED

In the end, Augustine describes our goal in eternal life by saying:

Our faith will then become truth, when we come to what we are promised as believers; but what we are promised is eternal life, and the truth said—not the truth our faith will become in the future, but the truth which is always truth because it is eternity—the truth said, *This is eternal life, that they should know you the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent;* therefore when our faith becomes truth by seeing, our mortality will be transformed into a fixed and firm eternity.<sup>20</sup>

Gregory says similarly:

God will be “all in all” at the time of restoration—“God,” not “the Father.” The Son will not revert to disappear completely in the Father, like a torch temporarily withdrawn from a great flame and then joined up again with it—Sabellians must not wrest this text. No, God will be “all in all” when we are no longer what we are now, a multiplicity of impulses and emotions, with little or nothing of God in us, but are fully like God, with room for God and God alone.<sup>21</sup>

Gregory and Augustine both fix on the idea of Christians becoming something they currently are not.<sup>22</sup> Augustine says that Christians will, “be transformed into a fixed and firm eternity.”<sup>23</sup> Gregory says that Christians will not be “a multiplicity of impulses and emotions . . . but . . . fully like God.”<sup>24</sup> Only God is a “fixed and firm eternity.” How, therefore, can Christians become a created eternity without participating in the uncreated eternity of God, without true transformation? Gregory is, in this statement, more explicit than Augustine, but the sentiment is the same: those who are Christians are currently being transformed—due to the Incarnation and

also evokes the imagery of passages like 2 Pet 1:4. Gods, on the contrary, spelled with a small g, signifies our continued individual nature in deification. It also accords with scriptures like Ps 82 and John 10:34.

20. *De Trin.* 4.2.4.

21. *Or.* 30.6.

22. It is important to note the different approaches Gregory and Augustine have toward the human person. Gregory tends to emphasize the innate nobility of the human person; whereas Augustine tends to emphasize the inherent sinfulness of the fallen human person. This causes Gregory to see the human person as something in need of further ennobling; and Augustine to see the human person as something first needing cleansing before ennobling can take place.

23. *De Trin.* 4.24.

24. *Or.* 30.6.

Indwelling—and will be completely transformed into something that is like God and not like they are currently. The doctrine of the Trinity includes—must include—deification.

What Gregory and Augustine show, therefore, is that defending God as Trinity, whether in defending the divinity of the Son or the Spirit or defending the Trinity as such, is done within the confines of salvation and deification. Note how both Augustine and Gregory make reference to the ultimate end of the Christian or how Gregory uses baptism as a defense of the divinity of all three persons of the Trinity. Human knowledge of the Trinity is directly related to God's plan of deifying humanity.<sup>25</sup>

### Thomas Aquinas: The Five Ways

Moving from the patristic to the medieval period, Thomas Aquinas' Five Ways of God make for an important starting point when thinking about God. Aquinas serves as a culmination of what has come before him, but what is more, in his Five Ways, Aquinas gives a series of definitions for God. These definitions provide a metaphysical framework from which both God and his relationship to the created cosmos can be understood. A. N. Williams in her work, *The Ground of Union*, suggests and demonstrates, "In seminal form, the Five Ways argue not only for God's existence, but also the existence of a Thomistic doctrine of theosis."<sup>26</sup> For Williams, the Five ways do this first by creating a "deep ontological and conceptual divide," between Creator and creature.<sup>27</sup> There is no other being like God, he is first, ultimately unique, and the source of all things. This safeguards against deification appearing pantheistic. By showing how utterly other God is than his creation, the Five Ways not only disallow pantheism, but in fact, allow for deification. Second, they show God as not only the source of all things, but as imparting his perfections to those things for which he is the source—namely, everything. The Five Ways not only establish

25. Cf. David Russell Mosley, "The Deifying Trinity: How Gregory Nazianzen and Augustine of Hippo Use Deification to Explain the Trinity," *Studia Patristica* 72 (2014): 147–56.

26. Williams, *Ground of Union*, 41.

27. *Ibid.*, 40.

God's uniqueness, but also, his communication of himself to others. Rudi A. Te Velde argues similarly: "What Thomas is looking for [in the Five Ways] is not so much rational certainty as intelligibility; to wit the intelligibility of the truth expressed and asserted by the proposition 'God exists.'"<sup>28</sup> That is, God's existence is intelligible, it is knowable precisely because, as Williams notes, God communicates himself. For both Te Velde and Williams, the Five Ways are more concerned with showing the efficacy of Aristotelean metaphysics and physics which arrives at the necessity of a first principle which Christians can recognize as God than proving that God exists.<sup>29</sup> The Five Ways show God's connectedness and graciousness in sharing his own life, his very nature with his creation, especially the attributes, being, goodness, and perfection.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, I shall take a brief look at the God described in the Five Ways: to see both the intelligibility of the God described and whether this God is a God who deifies.

In the First Way, Aquinas describes God as the First and Unmoved mover. According to Aquinas, if there is no first mover, then there are no movers which he uses to argue against an infinite regress, "But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover, and, consequently, no other mover; seeing that subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are put in motion by the first mover."<sup>31</sup> For Te Velde, this Way concerns the shortcomings of physics. Physics and natural science attempt to explain motion, but cannot account for its existence.<sup>32</sup> Aquinas argues that for motion to exist, there must be one who causes motion. This cannot, for Aquinas result in an infinite regress, for if it did, the distinction between one movement and the next would collapse and become non-traversable.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, there must be one who is the first cause of all motion. Te Velde writes, "The argument shows that being-in-motion, which is an essential feature of

28. Te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 39.

29. Despite Anthony Kenny, *The Five Ways: St. Thomas Aquinas' Proofs of God's Existence* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969).

30. Williams, *Ground of Union*, 41.

31. *ST* Ia, 2, 3.

32. Te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 51.

33. I am grateful to Simon Oliver for pointing this out to me.

physical objects cannot be understood as being unless it is reduced to a first mover, which is itself not part of the domain of mobile being. As a consequence the domain of physics appears to be a finite domain, as being in motion cannot constitute the ultimate nature of reality.”<sup>34</sup> This begins the definition of God as ontologically different from creation in a qualitative sense. Unlike all other movers within creation, God is not moved, he is both outside the sequence of movement, and yet, is the source of movement as the First, Unmoved Mover. In this way, God is utterly unique.

In the Second Way, Aquinas defines God as also the First, Uncaused efficient Cause. Similar to the first way, if there is no First efficient, Uncaused Cause, then there is no ultimate cause (or Final Cause, that is Way 5). If there is no first and no ultimate, then there is nothing in between:

Therefore, if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate cause. But if in efficient causes it is possible to go on to infinity, there will be no first efficient cause, neither will there be an ultimate effect, nor any intermediate efficient causes; all of which is plainly false. Therefore it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God.<sup>35</sup>

In this case again, God is being shown in his ontological uniqueness. God stands outside the line of causation, and yet, is the source of efficient causation. God is not the first in a line with the possibility of a cause behind him yet again, but is the source of all causation.

It is necessary to turn to the Fifth Way before examining the Third and Fourth. This is because the Fifth Way is linked directly to the Second. If, in the Second Way, God is called the Alpha in terms of causation, in the Fifth, God is the Omega. Here, Aquinas defines God as also the Final Cause or the end (and the direction toward the end) of all created things. Aquinas uses unintelligent (which is to say inanimate) nature to make this point: “Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed

34. Te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 55.

35. ST Ia. 2, 3.

with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer.”<sup>36</sup> Aquinas will later extrapolate this further so that it applies not only to unintelligent nature, but intelligent nature as well. That is, all created things are directed toward their end and both the director and the end are God. “Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God.”<sup>37</sup> What Aquinas does here is crucial for my argument. As Williams suggests, this Way also secures God’s ontological distinction; there is nothing after God in the Fifth Way, just as there is nothing before him in the Second, in causation. However, Aquinas also describes God as the end toward which all things tend. This is the first note of deification, the God who is ontologically other, and the First Mover and Cause is also the end for which all things were created.

Moving back to the Third Way, Aquinas here states that God is necessary being, which continues to make him unique when compared to all other beings who are not necessary. All other beings are contingent, they could be or not be. For instance, it is not necessary that I exist, I could die or have not existed at all. For this to be the case, however, Aquinas argues that there must be a necessary being. He writes:

Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence—which is absurd. Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. But every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, or not. Now it is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore we cannot but postulate the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God.<sup>38</sup>

If everything that exists within creation might not exist—and therefore, at one point in time, did not exist—then the only way for

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

there to be something rather than nothing is if there is a being outside of creation whose existence is not contingent, that is a being who could not not be. This continues to clarify God as unique; he is not a being among beings, but necessary being that allows all other beings to exist—by participation, as Aquinas will later argue.<sup>39</sup>

Building on the Third Way, the Fourth Way posits that just as we make value judgments about things in creation (a good tree, a bad bridge, a mediocre essay), so there must be a source for these things, an ultimate source (otherwise the comparison would always be relative). Aquinas writes, “Therefore there must also be something which is to all beings the cause of their being, goodness, and every other perfection; and this we call God.”<sup>40</sup> Aquinas not only suggests that God is a good, perfect, necessary being, but that he actually communicates these things to everything within creation. That is, God gives creatures their being, their goodness, and ultimately, their perfection (or completion or end), which the Fifth Way tells us is God himself.

Later in the *Summa*, Aquinas will add to this the notion of adoption. For Aquinas, God, being the source of all goodness, and infinitely happy in himself, can and does deign to share this goodness and happiness with his creatures, specifically, humans. Aquinas writes, “He does this primarily for rational creatures who, being made to the image of God, are capable of sharing God’s own happiness.”<sup>41</sup> This happiness, according to Aquinas, is God himself, for God’s happiness is in his enjoyment of himself and “his joyful possession of himself.”<sup>42</sup> Those with whom God chooses to share himself in this way are said, therefore, to be adopted by God and into God. The connection here to deification is quite clear. When God shares his perfections with humanity, they are said to receive God’s own happiness by adoption. I will return to this theme of adoption in chapter 6, when I discuss the nature of the Incarnation and its relationship to deification.

This series of definitions of God describes a God who desires to

39. Cf. *ST* Ia. 4, 3, resp., ad 3–4; Ia. 6, 4, resp.

40. *ST* Ia. 2, 3.

41. *ST* IIIa. 23, 1.

42. *Ibid.*

make creatures and then make them more like himself. By being truly distinct from his creations, God can make them more like himself. The way this happens, as I will argue, is by making the things what they were meant to be, that is, by becoming truly or fully human, humans are deified; by being truly or fully trees, trees are brought to their end, and so on. By being their mover, their first and final cause, indeed by making them partakers of himself, the God described in the Five Ways is a God who deifies, at varying levels, his creations because he created them. Of course, here, deify has multiple meanings. It is only humanity who is actually deified, for only humanity is made in the image and likeness of God. Nevertheless, as I will argue in the following two chapters, all of creation has a part in this deification through its participation in humanity.

### **Thomas Aquinas: The Trinity**

Gilles Emery is a useful interpreter as he sees the inherent link between Aquinas's Trinitarian theology and deification. According to Emery, Aquinas also discusses the Trinity within the confines of salvation, and therefore, deification. Emery argues, "St Thomas effectively makes the soteriological dimension of Trinitarian doctrine its primary dimension (*principalius*). This soteriological dimension concerns the action of the persons, and, more precisely, our knowledge of the divine persons, given by revelation. The faith in Christ which brings about salvation is inseparable from faith in the Trinity."<sup>43</sup> Human experience of the Trinity is always one that is revelatory and what is being revealed is the knowledge of human salvation by the Trinity. This experience is both the cause of this revelation and an effect of it. Real human experience of the Trinity reveals this knowledge to us. However, so too does revelation lead us to experiences of the Trinity, which reveal the divine economy regarding humanity's salvation. This salvation is effected by Christ, who must, for the salvation to be effectual (as above in Augustine and Gregory) be God. Emery also shows this within

43. Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Frances Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8.

Aquinas' thought, "If Christ is not God, he could not save, for he could not renew the faithful in the grace of the new creation, which is adoptive Sonship (meaning divinization). The reality of salvation rests on the divinity of Christ who, because he is God, enables us to participate in what he really is."<sup>44</sup> Emery says explicitly for Aquinas what we only see implicitly in Augustine—deification is what is given through the grace of Christ.

Salvation and Deification are inherently human, analogical (that is, an analogy of being) participations in the life of the Trinity. Christians are to share in the Sonship of Christ, which is only possible if Christ is truly Son and God. What makes this possible is the activity of the Spirit in the Christian, both in their daily life and through the Sacraments. Christians become Temples of the Holy Spirit as they imitate and conform/are conformed to the image of God who is Christ the Son. Emery argues it this way:

For a human being's own nature to be raised into communion with God, it is necessary to recognize, from the moment of participation in God onwards, a gift in her which will be the intrinsic principle of her sanctification, a reality which has a human size, and so is a created one, situated on the ontological plane of creatureliness: this is the grace which is called "created." This gift comes from God alone, because it is God alone who divinizes, God alone who makes human beings participants in his own divine nature. But, even when God gives himself, God remains distinct from human beings.<sup>45</sup>

What Emery here writes concerning God is something that is only possible through the Trinity as Trinity. That is, it is precisely because there is difference in God which allows for creation at all; and this allows for deification and salvation. For this reason, Christians are to be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that Christians are adopted into Christ's Sonship, becoming sons of the Father, and temples for the Holy Spirit. I will return to the theme of adoption into Christ's Sonship in the third chapter.

<sup>44</sup>. Ibid., 12.

<sup>45</sup>. Ibid., 253.

## Thomas Aquinas: Divine Simplicity

Thomas's account of the Trinity leads to the simplicity of God. It is possible, after considering any account of the Trinity, to conclude that God is made of parts. Thomas concludes, however, that this is not so, and cannot be so. While eight articles deal with the notion of divine simplicity, his response in *ST* Ia. 3, 7 serves as a helpful culmination of the preceding arguments. For Aquinas, God must be simple, "For there is neither composition of quantitative parts in God, since He is not a body; nor composition of matter and form; nor does His nature differ from His 'suppositum'; nor His essence from His existence; neither is there in Him composition of genus and difference, nor of subject and accident."<sup>46</sup> The other points consist in God being uncaused, unmoved, pure act, the co-incidence of essence and existence, and absolute form, or absolute real being.<sup>47</sup> The reasons for divine simplicity include many of the Five Ways: First Mover, First Efficient Cause, Necessary Being. As with the Five Ways, here, Thomas's arguments for divine simplicity are related to deification. Because God is simple, he is the being from which all other being is suspended. In discussing the coincidence of God's existence and essence, Aquinas argues that some things share in being by participation.<sup>48</sup> The example he gives is that of something on fire. A match, for instance, once struck is said to be on fire, but it is not fire itself. Rather, it is fire by participation. For this reason, argues Aquinas, God must be both his existence and his essence. Were he not, if he only had existence—in the same manner as the match has fire—he only has it by participation. Aquinas deems this absurd, partly because of the Third Way, which states that God is the necessary being. Partly also, however, because it would place being higher than God, since it is something in which God participates. This would, therefore, mean that God is not being, but is a being that participates in being. If this is so, then humans do not participate in God's being, but participate in whatever it is that being is. This, in turn, means that humans cannot be

46. *ST* Ia. 3,7.

47. *Ibid.*

48. *ST* Ia. 3, 4.

deified. God cannot be their deifier since he is only sharing in what he too participates. It is only because God is simple, as Aquinas defines it, that he can share himself with his creatures. It is his difference from his creatures that makes it possible for him to be so intimately close as to draw them into his Triune life and deify them. Yet, what is the nature of this drawing? It is, I will now argue, analogical.

### Thomas Aquinas: *Analogia Entis*

While analogy and even, to an extent, the *analogia entis* do not begin with Thomas Aquinas, he is the figure with whom it is most often associated. In this section, I will argue that inherent to deification, and to the role human creativity plays in deification, is the *analogia entis*. I will do this by examining Aquinas's thought on this issue through the recently translated work of Erich Pryzwara, his *Analogia Entis: Metaphysics: Original Structure and Universal Rhythm*.<sup>49</sup>

The *analogia entis*, according to Pryzwara is first based in a view of God as the source of all “possible whats.”<sup>50</sup> Without using the language of *logoi*, this is related to the notions of Maximus the Confessor, who argues that reason, *logoi*, of all things find their source in the *logoi* of God.<sup>51</sup> Pryzwara writes:

There is no uncreated “world of essences” (*ipsa quidditas creari dicitur* [*De Pot.* 3, 5 ad 2.]), but rather the “creative essence” of God (*creatrix essentia* [*De Pot.* 3, 5 ad 2.]). But then the formal potentiality likewise ends up in this sphere. For only then can there be a complete creative independence of God and (correlatively) a complete being “from Him” of the creature—when precisely the formal form of the creature’s creatureliness also comes from God.<sup>52</sup>

Rather than a platonic realm of the forms or ideas, that would stand as an independent entity from God, the essences that exist are, by

49. Erich Pryzwara, *Analogia Entis: Metaphysics: Original Structure and Universal Rhythm*, trans. John R. Betz and David Bentley Hart (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014).

50. *Ibid.*, 220–21.

51. *Amb.* 7. All citations from Maximus the Confessor, *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers: The Ambigua*, vols. 1–2, ed. and trans. Nicholas Constas (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

52. Pryzwara, *Analogia Entis*, 221.

nature, created essences since they are not the essence of God himself. Pryzwara is here dependent on *De Potentia* 3, 5. In this article, Aquinas is concerned with the question of whether there is anything that is not created by God. Aquinas answers in the negative. All things in their universals—again, one can here read *logoi* in the Maximian sense—derive from “a universal cause of things (universalem causam rerum).”<sup>53</sup> This means that all things derive from the “creating essence”<sup>54</sup> of God and derive their essence, their being from him. Yet, created essences are not emanations from God, they are rather *ex nihilo*; this will be important in the next chapter.<sup>55</sup> What concerns Pryzwara here about creation *ex nihilo* is that while creatures are created out of nothing, God does not desire that they return to nothingness.<sup>56</sup> Instead, God’s Is intends “the (enduring) positivity of the creature mysteriously merges with God’s own (eternal) positivity.”<sup>57</sup> This allows for a creaturely revelation of God, which allows one to “say equally that God wills the creature for its sake and that he wills it for himself.”<sup>58</sup> The creature is thus given a level of autonomy which is based in the “doctrine of secondary causes.”<sup>59</sup> This doctrine allows for the creature so to have its source in the divine Is that it has, “its own power of operation.”<sup>60</sup> Pryzwara goes on to argue that, “it is the most proper mystery of the divine Is (Truth, etc.) that something can remain completely *from* him and yet be so little identical with him that it can even say No to Him. This mystery declares the most proper otherness of God, above and beyond every creaturely similitude.”<sup>61</sup> The distinction between God and creature goes beyond any similarity. Yet, in the dissimilarity equally is the relation between God and creature.

53. *De Pot.* 3, 5. All citations from Thomas Aquinas, *De Potentia*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster: Newman Press, 1952, reprint of 1932), accessed 16 May 2015, <http://dhspriory.org/thomas/QDdePotentia.htm>.

54. *De Pot.* 3, 5, ad 2.

55. Cf. chapter 2.

56. Pryzwara, *Analogia Entis*, 224.

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Ibid.* Cf. *De Pot.* 5, 4, corp.

59. Pryzwara, *Analogia Entis*, 229.

60. *Ibid.* Cf. *De Ver.* 11, 1 corp.

61. Pryzwara, *Analogia Entis*, 231. Emphasis original.

It is worthwhile to quote Przywara, and his use of *De Veritate* at length here:

Hence, for Thomas Aquinas, the decisive analogy is essentially that of *proportio*, not however, *secundum convenientiam proportionalitatis* (i.e., observing the absolute dividing line of difference). Analogy thus lies between univocity (*univocatio*) and complete equivocity (*aequivocatio*) which would also obliterate the “relation.” It is (as *proportio proportionalitatis*) the alterity (*diversas proportiones*) of the same *one* term that is predicated of both God and creature (*ad aliquid unum*: e.g., being, good, etc.) in God and creature (*diversas proportiones ad aliquid unum*). Thus, if the *aliquid unum* implies a similarity (*similitudo*) between God and creature, this similarity is not simply “balanced out” by the dissimilarity of the mode (*modus*) in which this same *one* is in both God and creature (like and unlike, *simile* “et” *dissimile* [*De Ver. 2, 11 ad 1.*]).<sup>62</sup>

First, Pryzwara argues that analogy (what he calls an analogy of suspension, *proportio*)<sup>63</sup>, is neither univocity nor equivocity<sup>64</sup>. Analogy represents a third way of relating terms to creature and to God. Equivocity, he argues, obliterates the relation between God and creature. Univocity is also incorrect because it attempts to “balance out” the difference between God and creature through a mode in which they are the same yet different. Being, for instance, cannot be said of God and creature with the only difference between how the word is used of God, versus how the word is used of creatures, cannot simply be one of mode. Instead, analogy, according to Pryzwara and the Fourth Lateran Council, allows for the possibility of deification, which a univocal understanding would not. This kind of analogy is based in the Fourth Lateran Council’s formula that, “within every ‘similarity, however great’ is an ‘ever greater dissimilarity’ (*inter Creatorem et creaturam non potest tanta similitudo notari, quin inter eos maior sit dissimilitudo notanda* [Denz., 432.]).”<sup>65</sup> Therefore, no matter how great

62. Ibid., 232.

63. Later, Pryzwara will note an inherent relation between *analogia proportionis* and *analogia attributionis* which is ultimately the *analogia entis*. Ibid., 234–36.

64. Contra the claim of noted Scotists: see for instance, Daniel P. Horan, *Postmodernity and Univocity: A Critical Account of Radical Orthodoxy and John Duns Scotus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014); Richard Cross, “Where Angels Fear to Tread”: Duns Scotus and Radical Orthodoxy,” *Antonianum* 76 (2001): 7–41; Thomas Williams, “The Doctrine of Univocity is True and Salutary,” *Modern Theology* (2005): 575–85.

the similarity seen between God and creature, even in “the highest supernatural participation in God—namely participation in the intra-divine life of the three persons (union of love in grace, *unio caritatis in gratia*)—does not abolish the distance from what God is in himself (unity of identity in nature, *identitatis unitas in natura*), beyond everything, beyond even the most graced of creatures.”<sup>66</sup> This “highest supernatural participation in God” is deification. Pryzwara argues that deification is the participation of the human in “intra-divine life of the three persons (union of love in grace, *unio caritatis in gratia*).”<sup>67</sup> He will later call this supernatural participation in God deification.<sup>68</sup> Pryzwara then notes the inherently Trinitarian nature of this participation. In deification, one is not simply participating in God in some abstract sense, but in the Triune God. “‘Participation’ in the Father because one is a ‘child of the Father’; ‘participation’ in the Son because one is ‘conformed to the Son’; and thus ‘participation’ in the Holy Spirit, as the unity of Father and Son, because one is a ‘holy-spiritual man’ (*πνευματικός*).”<sup>69</sup> However, just as this participation is in the Triune God, that is in each person of the Trinity, so too is it a participation in God as single nature, precisely because it is a participation in all three persons. Pryzwara argues this through participation in the person of the Son: “Thus ‘participation in the divine nature’ becomes precisely a ‘participation in the divine person,’ thereby showing the ‘deification’ to be complete . . . such that ‘being in Christ’ appears essentially as ‘being in God.’”<sup>70</sup> Pryzwara ties this back to the beatific vision, which he sees as an inherently transformative vision.<sup>71</sup> I will return to the beatific vision—this time through Dante—in the final chapter.<sup>72</sup>

Pryzwara’s understanding of the *analogia entis*, primarily through Aquinas, leads him naturally to deification. I argued above that Aquinas’ Five Ways are an argument for deification: the relationship

65. Pryzwara, *Analogia Entis*, 234.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid., 365.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid., 366.

71. Cf. Ibid., 235; 274; 290–91.

72. Chapter 7.